¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: This report discusses the start-up and activities of the initial 10 ePRTs in Iraq, along with the challenges that they face as small, joint military-civilian operations at the very center of a conflict. On the whole, both the ePRTs and the brigades with which they have been embedded have adapted well to their unique circumstances, and they are well launched on a range of engagements and programs aimed at improving local governance, restoring essential services, promoting small business, and building confidence and reconciliation among their Iraqi counterparts. Yet it is far too soon to claim that these essential activities in the midst of violent conflict have already affected the level of conflict. Rather, the reverse is true: the ePRTs work best where the level of violence is lower and more permissive of their activities, where they can find counterparts who can work with us without losing their lives and families. Over time, the efforts of the ePRTs will show practical results where they can work, and will demonstrate to more violent communities that there is a better option than attacking the coalition and other Iraqis. This message ends with a list of a few of the ePRT's ongoing activities. END SUMMARY.

ePRT Concept
¶2. (U) The embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams (ePRTs) in Iraq are the civilian side of the surge and are a key component of the President's "New Way Forward." Embedded with Brigade Combat Teams (BCT) or Marine Regimental Combat Teams (RCT), these ePRTs differ substantially from their Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) cousins. Designed as a tactical instrument to operate at a district or even neighborhood level in the brigade's battle space, ePRTs are a decentralized tool to promote reconciliation and shape the political environment, build capacity at the local and district government level, support U.S. counter-insurgency strategy, encourage moderate elements, and support economic development at the micro level. They function within and as part of the BCTs and provide the civilian face in the BCTs' efforts to allow civil society to function normally.

¶3. (U) The basic element of the ePRT is a senior Foreign Service team leader, a civil affairs officer, a USAID officer, and a Bilingual and Bicultural Advisor (BBA). This core team is supplemented by subject matter experts tailored to the needs of the area covered by the individual ePRTs. The expertise represented by the experts includes agriculture, animal husbandry, city planning, waste removal, and rule of law, among many others. The experts initially were drawn from U.S. military reservists, but the Department is now hiring them and will hire replacements for them. The number of ePRT team members ranges from 8-14.

¶4. (U) The 10 ePRTs started with their four core team members in April and will continue to receive more members into the fall. The ePRTs have completed their first two months with the BCTs and have developed their relationships with their military colleagues, an element crucial to their success. Their plans of operations, called Joint Common Plans (JCPs), have been written and briefed to Corps and the Office of Provincial Affairs (OPA). The JCPs, along with individual mission statements and reports of accomplishments, have been emailed to NEA/I for review and distribution.

Assessment of ePRTs
¶5. (SBU) The ePRT team members all identified close relationships
with their military colleagues as essential to their effectiveness.
Their first four-five weeks were spent establishing these
relationships and proving their potential value to the brigades.
Totally dependent on the brigades for access to communications, life
support, movement, and every aspect of their existence, establishing
this rapport is crucial. With a strong and supportive relationship,
ePRT members are valued partners in the brigade; without it, ePRT
members may be cut off from important issues by not being invited to
meetings or being unable to secure transportation.

¶6. (SBU) Given the short time the ePRTs have been operating, our
overall assessment of the ePRTs' work is positive. All of them
established good working relationships with the military, worked out
their plans of action, and have begun their grassroots-level
activities in support of overall USG strategy. Each ePRTs'
environment is different -- rural or urban, permissive or
non-permissive, Shia or Sunni-and many of them operate in
surroundings that are a mix of different characteristics.

¶7. (SBU) The military is wholeheartedly supportive of the ePRTs, and
its request for five new ePRTs illustrates how much it values them.
Individual brigade commanders have extolled the ePRTs for adding
another dimension to their battle space - the civilian team members
could join in meetings, organize events, and talk to local leaders
when Iraqis were hesitant to associate with Americans in uniform.
By acting as the political and economic advisor to the brigade
commander, ePRT team leaders have contributed their personal
experience in foreign affairs, a contribution greatly enhanced by
the expertise of the USAID representatives and other members of the
teams.

¶8. (SBU) It is premature to expect an effect on the level of
violence from only two months' deployment of the ePRTs.
Relationships with key local figures are just beginning, and will
take time to achieve the levels of trust needed for real effort. In
addition, the level of violence has a great effect on the ability of
the ePRTs to carry out their mission: where the security situation
is more permissive, everything the team is trying to do becomes more
likely to work. Fortunately, the BCT and RCT areas of
responsibility are large enough so that ePRTs can generally find
some neighborhoods in which to engage effectively. In most of Anbar
province, the arrival of the teams was exceptionally well-timed, as
tribal and popular support was shifting away from insurgents and
foreign terrorists, and toward Iraqi institutions and coalition
forces, enabling the ePRTs to engage more quickly and easily with
their counterparts. Although levels of violence are higher in
Baghdad and North Babil, the teams are engaging anyway. We are
confident that their efforts will in time have an impact both in
engaging local levels with US personnel and higher levels of the
Iraqi Government, and setting an example other neighborhoods of the
advantages of working with the coalition and with Iraqi
institutions.

ePRT Challenges
¶9. (SBU) A small, newly formed civilian unit working in the midst of
a brigade undertaking combat operations faces unique challenges.
Having gained the acceptance and trust of military colleagues,
including not only the commander, but his brigade staff and the
associated civil affairs unit, the ePRTs must also ensure that there
is joint planning of their activities, and acceptance by the
military that those activities require the ePRT to "go outside the
wire" (i.e. leave the safety of the forward operating base (FOB))
frequently and regularly.

¶10. (SBU) The delay in release of the Quick Reaction Funds (QRF),
billed as the civilian equivalent of the military's CERP funds, is
one of the major concerns of the teams in the field. Especially for
the ePRTs, there have been high expectations by the brigades to see
what they could bring to the struggle besides just personnel. The
JCPs broadly identified areas where QRF would be used, and ePRT team
leaders are anxious to be able to contribute. Fortunately, USAID

programs are already available to ePRTs, although in some cases
micro credit facilities are more limited than teams and their
brigades would like. Additional micro credit loan capital is
planned when supplemental funds actually reach the field.

¶11. (SBU) Getting the right people for the jobs at the ePRTs remains
a moving target. The core team is set, but the blend of experts at
each ePRT varies and can change as the ePRT better learns what it
actually needs. The Department has done a superb job of providing
the surge personnel for the ePRTs and PRTs, and OPA is working
closely with the ePRTs to ensure that they receive the right people
for their mission. Thus OPA may need to adjust the personnel slated
for individual ePRTs, by switching persons already in country or who
are en route, but OPA may also need to adjust categories and numbers
of experts with Washington. A separate message will address our
needs for the new ePRTs and for delivering the QRF funds promptly.

ePRT Activities
¶12. (SBU) To give you a flavor of the activities and accomplishments
of ePRTs and their related Brigades in their first two months of
existence, a few are listed below for each individual ePRT:

Baghdad 1, 4/1 ID, Rasheed District
-- Major renovation of the district council facilities, including a
new reception area, public events hall, and office space.
-- Weekly training sessions and mentoring for district council
members, resulting in more focused meetings and more progress by the
council.
-- In partnership with the district council, the ePRT is developing
an Economic Growth Strategy, including a new Business Information
Center to promote private sector economic growth.
-- The renovation and reopening of the Doura Market Complex has
increased the number of shops open from only 2 in December to over
235 today.

Baghdad 2, 2/2 ID
-- Standardization of district council halls to ensure that each is
in good repair and provides a basic set of services.
-- Provision of adult literacy education.
-- Revitalization of industries to expand employment
opportunities.
-- Expansion of secure markets.

Baghdad 3, 2/82 ABN
-- Governance office meets with District Councils to identify
moderates it can support.
-- Economic Development Office is expanding business leadership by
creating a jobs center, helping open up SOEs, and promoting
micro-businesses.
-- Project management office coordinates more than 168 projects,

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with a value of $400 million, in its battle space.
-- Ensures that its efforts are accepted by the local community, all
of its projects will have Iraqi leadership and will in part be led
by Iraqis.

Baghdad 4, 2/20 MTN
-- Work with district councils and local directors general to
develop a comprehensive strategy that results in an accountable and
transparent local government.
-- Coordination of GOI agencies' governance activities with the
ePRT/BCT's stability efforts.
-- Provision of expertise to the BCT's governance, public
utilities, and economic projects.
-- Promotion of economic reform and self-sufficiency at the local
level.

Baghdad 5, 1/1 CAV
-- Support for the Taji branch of the Al-Bashir micro-finance
institution by training four local loan officers (four more next
month) and the transfer of loan capital.
-- Development of a training course on starting your own business
for small and medium sized business entrepreneurs.
-- Revitalization of local SOEs - a cement, furniture, and ice

plant.
--   Improvement of local courtroom security and safe courtrooms.

Baghdad 6, 2/1 ID
--   Work with the neighborhood and district councils to identify
essential service projects and follow up with Baghdad's Department
of Public Works for project implementation.
--   Help devolve U.S.-led private contractor projects back to the
public service sector.
--   Monitor the district and neighborhood councils and help ensure
that Iraqi Security Forces are included in all public works
projects.
--   Identification of areas where USAID implementation partners can
assist local businesses and provide micro-financing.

Northern Babil, 4/25 ID
--   Identified eight "model communities," in which the ePRT will
encourage local participation in government and increased security
by establishing training and assistance programs.
--   Trained the Iraqi budget, administrative, and finance managers
in the eight communities so that they could work effectively with
provincial and national level government officials.
--   Trained medical first responders in each of the eight
communities.
--   Hosted a planning conference that brought together experts from
USAID, military officers, and Babil and other PRTs to work with the
ePRT and develop its programs and training modules.

Anbar 1, 6 RCT
--   Formed a reconstruction committee of key city engineers to
identify and prioritize city service projects for consideration by
the city council and mayor.
--   Worked with the city engineers to develop operation and
maintenance budgets for their departments.
--   Coordinated the inclusion of influential tribal leaders into the
civil government process.
--   Assisted in building municipal government links to the
provincial and district councils.

Anbar 2, 1/3 ID
--   Restored electrical power to more than 70% of the city of Ramadi
in concert with the municipal government.
--   Assisted in final reconstruction of the Kabeer water treatment
plant, permitting water again to flow into Ramadi.
--   Cleared the garbage and debris from soccer fields so that Ramadi
youth could again play soccer and have some semblance of a normal
life.
--   Helped open a new Ramadi municipal center that provides a secure
meeting place for the city council, mayor, and district governors.

Anbar 3, 2 RCT
--   Intensive meetings with mayors of the largest towns to help them
better access Iraqi Government funds, better manage projects, and
strengthen popular support for local government institutions.
--   Moderated tribal and political infighting by working closely
with local sheikhs.
--   Increased support for the smaller tribes to bring them more into
the fold and to defuse tensions.
--   Started the new port of entry project at Huseybah on the Syrian
border to increase commerce and revenues for local institutions.

¶18. (SBU) The ePRT program, though still in its early days, has
already become an essential component of our national effort to
stabilize, democratize, and strengthen Iraqi institutions, public
services and businesses at the local level.
Crocker